

Utilizing Paraprofessionals in a Title I Targeted Assistance Program

Title I Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) recommends that targeted assistance Title I programs utilize highly qualified teachers for providing instruction to Title I students. The law's intent is to provide a district's most academically needy students with consistent, high quality supplementary instruction.

While the preference for utilizing highly qualified teachers is clear, Title I services may be delivered by qualified paraprofessionals. If this is done, a district must meet specific conditions:

1. **Title I paraprofessionals may perform the following duties §1119(g)(2)**
 - Provide one-on-one tutoring for eligible students
 - Assist with classroom management
 - Provide assistance in the computer laboratory
 - Conduct parent involvement activities
 - Provide support in the library or media center
 - Act as a translator
 - Provide instructional services to students under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher
2. **Title I paraprofessionals must work under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. §1119(g)(3)(A).** While "direct supervision" is not defined in the law it is generally interpreted to mean that the highly qualified teacher
 - Plans the Title I activities for eligible students
 - Evaluates the Title I students' work and assesses them for entry and exit into the Title I program
 - Is accessible to Title I students
 - Is in close proximity to the Title I paraprofessional working with Title I students

Impact of state law on duties of Title I paraprofessionals

Title I law prescribes federal parameters for the use of paraprofessionals in Title I programs. However, district personnel must also be aware of state laws pertaining to licensure requirements for personnel providing *instruction*.

Under PI 34.33(6) a reading teacher (316) license **is required** for the following assignments:

1. A reading assignment for more than one class per day;
2. A reading assignment in a Title I program identified as a reading program;
3. A reading assignment in a reading recovery program or READ 180 if not part of a self-contained classroom.

In addition, PI 34.01 (59) defines "teaching" as improving pupil learning by planning instruction, diagnosing learning needs, prescribing content delivery through classroom activities, assessing student learning, reporting outcomes to administrators and parents, and evaluating the effects of instruction. Teaching duties should not be assumed by paraprofessionals.

District personnel must carefully review the Title I services provided by paraprofessionals to ensure that the services do not require reading or other teacher licensure under state law.

Illustrative Scenarios

The following scenarios are meant to illustrate the proper staffing and licensure for Title I Targeted Assistance Programs.

Scenario 1

Based on the school's needs assessment, Hillcrest Elementary School provides a Title I reading program for eligible students in grades 1-3. In addition to Title I instruction provided by a highly qualified Title I reading teacher, students are tutored by Title I paraprofessionals 3 times a week after school. The paras are provided tutoring materials by the students' teachers.

Does this meet federal guidelines? Yes, the supplemental reading instruction is delivered by a highly qualified reading teacher and paraprofessional support is directed by highly qualified teachers.

Does this meet state licensure guidelines? Yes, state reading licensure is not required for tutors and the Title I teacher is certified to teach reading.

Scenario 2

Based on the school's needs assessment, Sand Creek Middle School uses Title I funds to provide READ 180 instruction to students in grades 5-8 who score below Basic on the WKCE and other assessments. The program is delivered by Title I paras under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher.

Does this meet federal guidelines? Yes, the para is working under the supervision of a highly qualified teacher.

Does this meet state licensure guidelines? No, in Wisconsin READ 180 must be delivered by a teacher holding a 316 reading license.

Scenario 3

Based on the school's needs assessment, Harvey Elementary uses its Title I allocation to hire 4 Title I paraprofessionals that are each assigned to a first or second grade classroom. During the regular school day, these paraprofessionals, under the direction of the classroom teacher, provide small group interventions in reading and mathematics to students who have been identified as Title I eligible.

Does this meet federal guidelines? Yes, the paras work in close proximity to the teacher, and provide interventions designed by the teacher. As long as the Title I interventions do not prohibit the student from receiving full access to the core curriculum, this is acceptable.

Does this meet state licensure guidelines? Yes, since the interventions are designed by and delivered under the supervision of a teacher. The paras are supporting the role of the teacher, not assuming teacher responsibilities.

Scenario 4

Springfield School District gets a very small Title I allocation that only covers the cost of a Title I paraprofessional at the elementary school. With state/local funds, the district hires a highly qualified teacher who assesses student needs, designs the supplemental math instruction for eligible students and determines when students have made sufficient progress to exit the Title I program. The highly qualified teacher directly supervises the Title I paraprofessional who delivers Title I services.

Does this meet federal guidelines? Yes, the supplemental instruction is assessed and developed by a highly qualified teacher.

Does this meet state licensure guidelines? Yes.